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Pleasanton school board braces for more cuts at meeting tonight, including adult ed cuts

Facing possible \$5.4 million in funding losses, district likely to cancel Barton, other programs

The Pleasanton school board plans to spend an hour tonight reviewing a list of potential cuts that include eliminating the Barton Reading Program, cutting reading support at elementary schools and reducing counseling services at all grade levels.

The list of cuts is identical to the one in use for the last few months, although two board members, Valerie Arkin and Jamie Hintzke, had asked staff to look into other cuts in the hope of saving the Barton program.

The cut list also includes eliminating adult education and summer school programs as well as eliminating the director of those programs, Glen Sparks, and ending support for home schooling. It would also cut program specialists and a psychologist.

The list also includes cutting back on custodians at middle and high schools and the district office, as well as cutting grounds services and maintenance services. All the cuts are reductions of fulltime employees (FTEs) and may not actually eliminate jobs, with the possible exception of Sparks.

Car allowances for management would be cut or reduced as well.

The total savings would be just over \$2.2 million.

Those cuts are in addition to the cuts proposed for this year that were later restored through fundraising, concessions from the district's two unions and dipping into district reserves.

Those cuts included, among others, eliminating an elementary school band and strings teacher, cuts to site technology specialists and library assistants at middle and elementary schools, cutting counseling services at middle and high schools, and eliminating class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three.

Restoring those cuts would total more than \$3.1 million, and the two cuts lists total more than \$5.3 million altogether.

Luz Cazares, assistant superintendent of business services, has been planning for two scenarios, describing them as bad and worse.

In one, if a tax increase plan set for November passes, some of the cuts could be eliminated halfway through the year, although it would still eliminate funding for transportation.

The other, if the tax hike fails, could mean cuts of \$5.4 million to the district.

Cazares has said she must plan for the worst-case scenario and notes the state budget contains "risky assumptions." Given that, the district is preparing layoff notices for some employees.

The board is also set to finalize its policy allowing drug detection dogs onto high school campuses. If approved, that could potentially send dogs to high schools the next day.

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